

Sidalcea malviflora (D.C.) Gray ex. Berth.
ssp. ***virgata*** (T.J. Howell) C.L. Hitchcock
rose checker mallow
Malvaceae (Mallow Family)

Status: State Endangered
Rank: G5T?S1

General Description: Adapted from Hitchcock et al. (1961): A perennial herbaceous taxon that grows from trailing and freely rooting rhizomes, and can reach 4¾ feet (1½ m) tall. It has five sepals and five petals ranging in color from light pink to purple, sometimes reddish or rosy colored. The leaves are kidney shaped, and are 2/3 to 3 ½ in. (2 to 8 cm) broad. The whole plant is uniformly pubescent. The calyx lobes are not widened above the base and are tapered evenly to the tip. The carpels are deeply pitted and form a pattern. The vegetation is not particularly waxy. The stem is not hollow and cylindrical.

Identification Tips: *Sidalcea campestris* is found in the same areas as *S. malviflora* ssp. *virgata*. *S. campestris* can be distinguished by its paler flowers and deeply dissected leaves. The pedicels of each can differ in length: *S. campestris* has pedicels which are 1/8 to ¾ in. (3 to 20 mm), whereas *S. malviflora* ssp. *virgata* has pedicels at a length of no more than ¼ in. (3 to 8 mm.).

Phenology: *Sidalcea malviflora* ssp. *virgata* blooms from May to June.

Range: The rose checker mallow has only been found at one disjunct site in Washington and is known to occur in the Willamette Valley to California and east to West Virginia.

Habitat: The taxon has been found in open meadows, along fence lines, along roadsides, upon grassy hillsides, and in low mountain areas. The population in Washington is found in the Thurston County area in open prairie land. In Oregon, it is known to occur in rolling upland, wetland prairies, wetlands, and deciduous and evergreen forests of the Willamette Valley.

Ecology: This taxon occurs in prairie and meadow environments that have been historically maintained by fire. Fire may be an important aspect of maintaining appropriate habitat for this taxon.

Sidalcea malviflora
ssp. ***virgata***
rose checker mallow



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Known distribution of
Sidalcea malviflora
ssp. *virgata*
in Washington



● Current (1980+)
○ Historic (older than 1980)

Sidalcea malviflora
ssp. *virgata*
rose checker mallow



Photo by Dave Hayes



Photo by Dave Hayes



Photo by Tom Kaye



Photo by Tom Kaye

Sidalcea malviflora
ssp. *virgata*
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State Status Comments: The species is endangered in Washington due the extremely small size of the one known population (one plant that has produced some seedlings through self-pollination).

Inventory Needs: The one occurrence in Washington consists of a single plant along a fence line in a prairie. Glacial outwash prairies in the southern Puget Sound area should be systematically inventoried for this taxon.

Threats and Management Concerns: The extremely small size of the Washington population puts it at great risk. Conifer and non-native shrub encroachment are an ongoing concern.

References:

Hitchcock, C.L., A. Cronquist, M. Ownbey, J.W. Thompson. 1961.
Vascular Plants of the Pacific Northwest Part 3: Saxifragaceae to Ericaceae. University of Washington Press, Seattle, WA. 614 pp.